

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26192

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: CONTINUATION OF UNPDAC IN THAILAND

SUMMARY: DIRECTOR OF UNPDAC IN THAILAND, IAN WILLIAMS, CALLED ON CHARGE SEPT 20, ACCOMPANIED BY COLONEL CHAWALIT YOTMANI, CHIEF OF POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CENTER, FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION OF NAR-

COTICS SITUATION. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER FUTURE CONTINUATION OF UNPDAC IN THAILAND.END SUMMARY.

1. WILLIAMS WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED AT INDICATIONS HE HAS HAD FROM HEADQUARTERS OF UNPDAC IN GENEVA THAT CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN TO ENDING THE UN PROGRAM IN THAILAND IN 1977. COST OF UN PROGRAM IS ABOUT \$700,000 PER YEAR, AND HE BELIEVED THAT, WITH FURTHER ECONOMIES, IT COULD BE KEPT BELOW THAT FIGURE. MEANWHILE, UNPDAC IN THAILAND IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH PUBLIC WELFARE DEPARTMENT OF MINISTRY OF INTERIOR TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF THAILAND WHERE UN-DEVELOPED SUBSTITUTE CROPS FOR OPIUM WILL BE INTRODUCED IN PHASED PROGRAM TO APPLY OPIUM CULTIVATION BAN OF 1959 (ON STATUTE BOOKS BUT SO FAR NEVER APPLIED). MOREOVER, RTG HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO CONTRIBUTING BAHT 2.8 MILLION (\$140,000) TO UNPDAC THIS FISCAL YEAR. RTG WANTS TO BE SURE THAT IT IS IN POSITION TO TAKE OVER CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM IN 1978, WHEN UNPDAC IS SCHEDULED TO PHASE OUT, AND ARRANGEMENTS
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FOR SMOOTH HANDOVER TO RTG HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

2. WILLIAMS SAID HE IS NOT SURE WHETHER NOISES HE HAS HEARD COMING OUT OF GENEVA ON TERMINATION OF UNPDAC IN THAILAND REFLECT ANNOYANCE IN UNFDAC OVER SLOWNESS OF RELEASE OF RTG CONTRIBUTION TO UNPDAC AND ARE DESIGNED AS TACTIC TO EXPEDITE RTG ACTION, OR WHETHER THERE IS SERIOUS POSSIBILITY OF PREMATURE END TO UNPDAC IN THAILAND. IF FORMER IS THE CASE, THREATENING NOISES ABOUT TERMINATION ARE UNFORTUNATE AND UNNECESSARY, AS EARLY RELEASE OF FUNDS (BEFORE END OF THAI FISCAL YEAR ON SEPTEMBER 30) IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN. IF LATTER IS CASE, AND UNFDAC WISHES TO TERMINATE THAI PROGRAM PREMATURELY, ACTION WILL BE MOST INOPPORTUNE, JUST AS ORDERLY PROCESS OF EXTENSION OF RESULTS OF UN SUBSTITUTE CROP RESEARCH IS IN THE PLANNING STAGE.

3. WILLIAMS WOULD BE APPRECIATIVE IF USMISSION GENEVA COULD INQUIRE DISCREETLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THERE IS SERIOUS POSSIBILITY OF EARLY TERMINATION OF UNPDAC.

4. COMMENT: WE AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE SHORT-SIGHTED WASTE OF FUNDS EXPENDED SINCE 1973 TO TERMINATE UNPDAC JUST AS IT IS REACHING POINT OF APPLICATION OF RESEARCH. THERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF GROWING THAI CONFIDENCE THAT THEY CAN MAKE PROGRESS IN CROP SUBSTITUTION AREA. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER ON DETAILS OF PLANNING NOW UNDER WAY.
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